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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2006

#### In Today's Papers

##### Kurdish Party Calls for PKK Ceasefire

All papers: Turkey's main Kurdish party, the Democratic Turkey Party (DTP,) called on the outlawed PKK to unilaterally lay down their arms. DTP leader Ahmet Turk said the party grassroots demanded a ceasefire, adding he expected a positive response from the PKK/Kongra-Gel. Papers comment that while earlier ceasefire calls by the DTP were directed at both the Turkish army and the PKK, this one was meant only for the PKK. Renowned Kurdish politician Abdulmelik Firat, head of HAKPAR party, claimed that the DTP had been acting under the instructions of the PKK leadership, drawing speculation that the PKK was in trouble and was seeking a ceasefire. Another Kurdish politician, Serafettin Elci, said a ceasefire would not end the fighting as long as there are armed PKK militants in the mountains.

##### Turkey Sends Letter to EU

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Zaman and others report Ankara said in a letter seen as a response to the EU progress report on Turkey that Greek Cypriots would not be allowed into Turkish ports and airports unless the isolation of Turkish Cyprus is brought to an end. The letter also says Turkey was the second country to recognize the Armenian state; that bilateral trade between the two countries amounts to USD 120 million; and there are some 40,000 Armenian nationals working in Turkey, adding that Armenia had not responded to Turkish proposals to establish a joint commission of historians to research genocide claims. It notes the rise in the PKK terrorism in southeast Turkey aimed at undermining EU harmonization reforms, and urges the EU to call on the PKK to lay down arms. It said Turkey was looking for ways to reopen the Halki Seminary within the framework of the Turkish Constitution. The letter said controversial articles of the new anti-terror law, including Article 301, did not violate free speech, adding that there were similar provisions in European countries. Meanwhile, visiting British Minister of State for Europe Geoff Hoon said in Istanbul that the EU must cooperate with Turkey against the PKK

terrorist organization.

#### Anniversary of September 12 Military Takeover in Turkey

Turkish papers carry news and opinion pieces strongly critical of the interruption of democracy in Turkey after the takeover by a military junta in September 12, 1980 on the anniversary of the coup today. Analysts said September 12 initiated a tradition of "illegality" in Turkey, legitimizing the mandate and implementations of the junta leaders. Several intellectuals reportedly called for the generals who perpetrated the takeover to be tried. Academics said coup leaders stripped their autonomy because they saw universities as enemies. Cumhuriyet says September 12 imprisoned and tortured thousands of workers, students, intellectuals, and artists, bringing the fledgling Turkish democracy to a standstill.

#### US Donates Scholarship Funds to Commemorate 9/11

Sabah, Milliyet, Aksam, Bugun, Vatan and others: Today's papers cover the donation ceremony held yesterday in the garden of the US Embassy in Ankara. In commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US, the US mission donated \$10,000 to the Association for Aid and Solidarity with the Families of Martyrs from the Security Services (EMSAD). US Ambassador Ross Wilson said at the ceremony that "Turkey and the US would not bow before the terrorists and will continue to fight against the PKK together." Papers also reported that US Principal Officer in Adana Eric Green visited the Association for Solidarity with families of martyrs in Adana. Green was welcomed by a veteran who had lost his legs in operations in Northern Iraq in 1997. NTV and others report that the veteran told Green that "if the US had acted in time against the PKK, he would have been able to stand up and greet the Consul."

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#### Zawahiri Declares UNIFIL the Enemy of Islam

Sabah, Radikal and others reported that the second-in-command of Al-Qaeda Ayman-Al-Zawahiri, in a web site, threatened the US and Israel, declared the UNIFIL the enemy of Islam and added that whoever joins the UN forces will be damned. Radikal reports that Zawahiri issued a call to the Iraqi Kurds as well to cease relations with the US and Israel.

#### Bryza on Lebanon, the PKK

Zaman reports Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Bryza told a panel meeting in Istanbul that if Turkey wants to play a leadership role in the Middle East, it should participate in the international force for Lebanon. DAS Bryza also gave the message that the appointment of US Special Envoy for Countering the PKK, Joseph Ralston, indicated US determination to end the PKK threat against Turkey.

#### Editorial Commentary on the 9/11 Anniversary

Mustafa Balbay comments in the nationalist-leftist Cumhuriyet: "Looking back on the twin towers attack after five years, it seems that it served the American neo-cons' interests. With the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, the US today seems to be holding the key to the door to the Middle East and Central Asia, and this is a privilege it would not like to give up. There are only two options offered by the US to the entire world in the aftermath of 9/11 events: either terrorism or war; either imperialism or religious radicalism; either nuclear weapons or suicide bombers."

Cuneyt Ulsever observes in the mass appeal Hurriyet: "The 21st century began on September 11, 2001, as did World War III. On the very same day Turkey became a de facto part of this war. The developments after the 9/11 events have redefined the world. There are a lot of reasons behind this. One of them is the consumption of oil in the US and the huge deficit between local production and consumption."

TV Highlights  
NTV (8 A.M.)

Domestic News

- On September 30, Prime Minister Erdogan will take part in a think-tank gathering in New York before meeting with President Bush in Washington on October 2. Erdogan will meet with British Prime Minister Blair in London on October 3 before returning home the same day.

- Government Spokesman Cemil Cicek said the Turkish cabinet decided in principle to appoint retired General Edip Baser as coordinator on terrorism.

- Government Spokesman Cemil Cicek said the government is investigating the murder in the Ismail Aga Mosque in Istanbul, warning against the exploitation of the investigation for political ends. Opposition CHP is to submit a motion for a parliamentary investigation into the murder of the retired imam in the mosque and the subsequent lynching of the assailant.

- The Turkish parliament will convene extraordinarily September 19 to discuss EU harmonization reforms.

- A Turkish military plane crashed near Mount Kazdaglari in the Canakkale province; the pilot parachuted to safety.

#### International News

- On Monday, thousands across the United States marked the fifth anniversary of 9/11 terrorist attacks. Secretary Rice said the world is safer now than it was before 9/11.

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- Palestinian President Abbas said al-Fatah and Hamas have agreed to form a coalition government "within days." The government program contains statements amounting to indirect recognition of Israel.

- Turkish Cyprus "Prime Minister" Ferdi Sabit Soyer has presented his resignation to President Mehmet Ali Talat. Soyer's junior coalition partner Serdar Denktas holds Ankara responsible for the collapse of the government.

- NATO airstrikes have killed a further 200 suspected Taliban fighters in the last two days, pushing the toll of militants killed in a 10-day offensive past 500.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

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